



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
Item: #6
Date: 09/07/23

August 24, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks
Miti Figueiredo, Deputy Director of Parks
Andrew Frank, Chief, Park Development Division

Michael F. Riley
Miti

RAP

FROM: Patricia McManus, Design Section Supervisor, Park Development Division
Ching-Fang Chen, Landscape Architect/Project Manager

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CFC

SUBJECT: Park Facility Plan - Future Neighborhood Park in Lyttonsville

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE the Recommended Facility Plan, including the cost estimate.

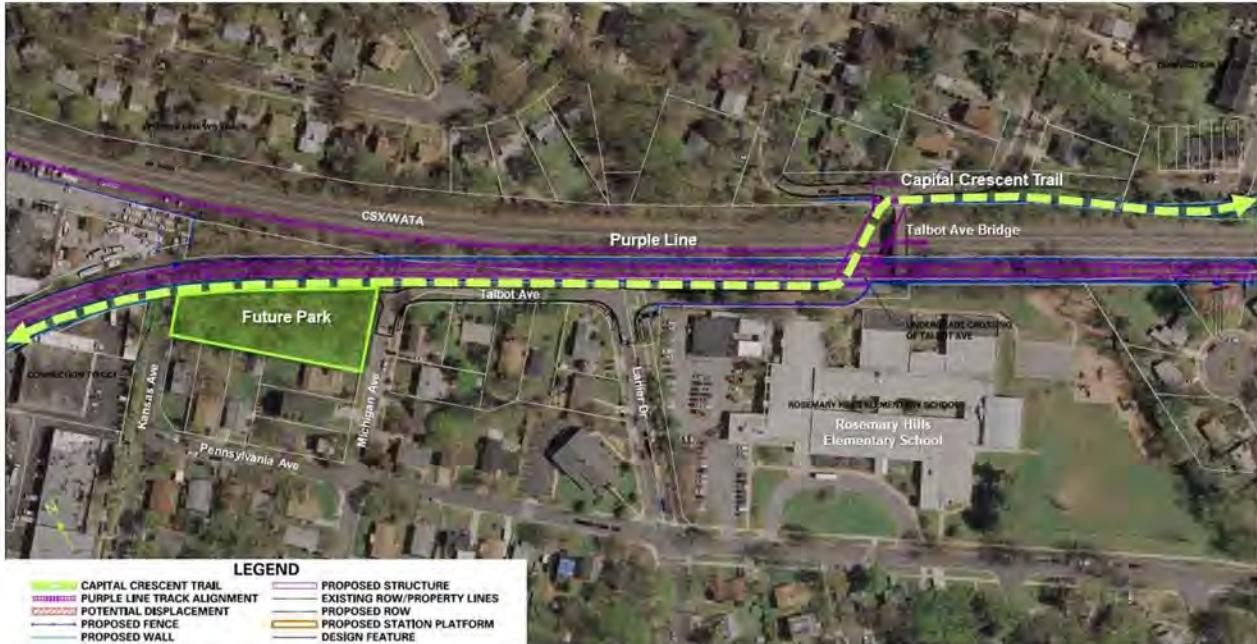
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to develop a facility plan for a new neighborhood park located at 2205 Kansas Avenue in Silver Spring, Maryland. The intent is to create a new park and a rest stop with amenities along the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) and the Purple Line light rail while providing environmental benefits and highlighting the unique character and history of Greater Lyttonsville.



Vicinity Map



2018 Aerial Map (Purple Line Light Rail)

The site is approximately .75 miles south of the Capital Beltway in the Lyttonsville neighborhood. It is adjacent to the existing Georgetown Branch and the CSX/WMATA right-of-way at the end of Talbot Avenue between Kansas Avenue and Michigan Avenue.

The parcel fronts the future [Capital Crescent Trail](#) and [Purple Line](#) light rail on the north side, single family dwellings on the south and east, and light industrial uses on the west side. Once completed, the 16-mile Purple Line light rail line will extend from Bethesda in Montgomery County to New Carrollton in Prince George's County and provide a direct connection to the Metrorail Red, Green and Orange Lines. The site is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the future Purple Line Lyttonsville Station and is currently being utilized as a staging area for construction of the Purple Line. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has agreed to transfer this 0.71-acre parcel referenced as Purple Line Parcel 138 and Meadowbrook Annex Replacement Area, addressed at 8998 Talbot Avenue, to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) upon completion of the Purple Line to become a new park and a part of the Capital Crescent Trail greenway corridor.

The Capital Crescent Trail is the most popular trail in Montgomery County. It is a shared-use path that follows an abandoned railroad right of way and extends 11 miles from Georgetown to Silver Spring via Bethesda. The current temporary gravel surface between Bethesda and Lyttonsville will be paved as part of the Purple Line project. This trail will serve a recreational and transportation function, as well as provide direct access to the Purple Line and the Bethesda and Silver Spring Metrorail stations. Other nearby recreational facilities include the Rosemary Hills-Lyttonsville Local Park and [Gwendolyn E. Coffield Community Center](#), which offer a variety of recreation programs and activities including a playground, a picnic area, walking paths, athletic fields, and courts.

Lyttonsville was originally an all-Black enclave in Silver Spring founded in the 1850s by a free Black laborer, Samuel Lytton. The Talbot Avenue bridge is a historic, one-lane wood and steel bridge that crosses the CSX railroad tracks between Hanover Street and Lanier Drive. The bridge provided black residents access to employment, shopping, and recreational opportunities that were unavailable in Lyttonsville. It represents a historic connection between the segregated communities.



Talbot Avenue Bridge (1918-2019)

The deteriorating 100-year-old bridge was demolished in the spring of 2019. A new bridge is under construction in conjunction with the Purple Line construction. The project intends to incorporate components of the historic bridge into the park to commemorate the unique history and culture of Greater Lyttonsville.

Project Funding

Facility planning includes a preliminary design, cost estimate, and determination of regulatory feasibility. The facility planning study for the project was funded with \$125,000 from the FY 2022 Capital Improvements Program in the Facility Planning Local Parks PDF.

Existing conditions data and access to the site was limited during the facility planning process due to ongoing Purple Line construction activities. The facility planning study was based primarily on the GIS Lidar layer and information provided by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), Atkins and RJM Engineering. Park concepts were developed in-house by Park Development Division (PDD) staff with community input. Clark Azar & Associates, Inc. (CAA) was hired to provide site engineering services. 3D modeling and renderings were provided by Hord Coplan Macht (HCM), and the bridge conservation assessment was provided by EverGreene Architectural Arts.

If approved the project will be proposed for final design and construction in the FY 2025-2030 Capital Improvements Program.

Facility Planning Process

The facility planning process included the following work:

1. Collect site data and analyze existing site conditions.
2. Prepare a Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) and Forest Conservation Exemption.
3. Meet with the community to gather input and ideas for the park.
4. Identify program of requirements and develop concept plan alternatives.
5. Present design alternatives to the community and stakeholders.
6. Develop a recommended concept plan based on community input.

7. Prepare a stormwater management concept plan and coordinate with stakeholder groups and regulatory agencies.
8. Present the recommended plan to the community.
9. Finalize the recommended plan based on feedback from the community and regulatory agencies.
10. Prepare the facility plan staff report, cost estimate, and operating budget estimate.
11. Present facility plan recommendations and costs to the Montgomery County Planning Board for approval.

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan, Approved and Adopted May 2017

The vision of the Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan is to preserve the integrity of the area's neighborhoods along with their special heritage and character, while strategically encouraging mixed-use development near transit and expanding parks, trails, and open spaces. The Plan envisions Lyttonsville to have great transit and walkability with celebrated community identity, while enforcing limited and responsible development and enhancing healthy ecology. The Plan recommends to:

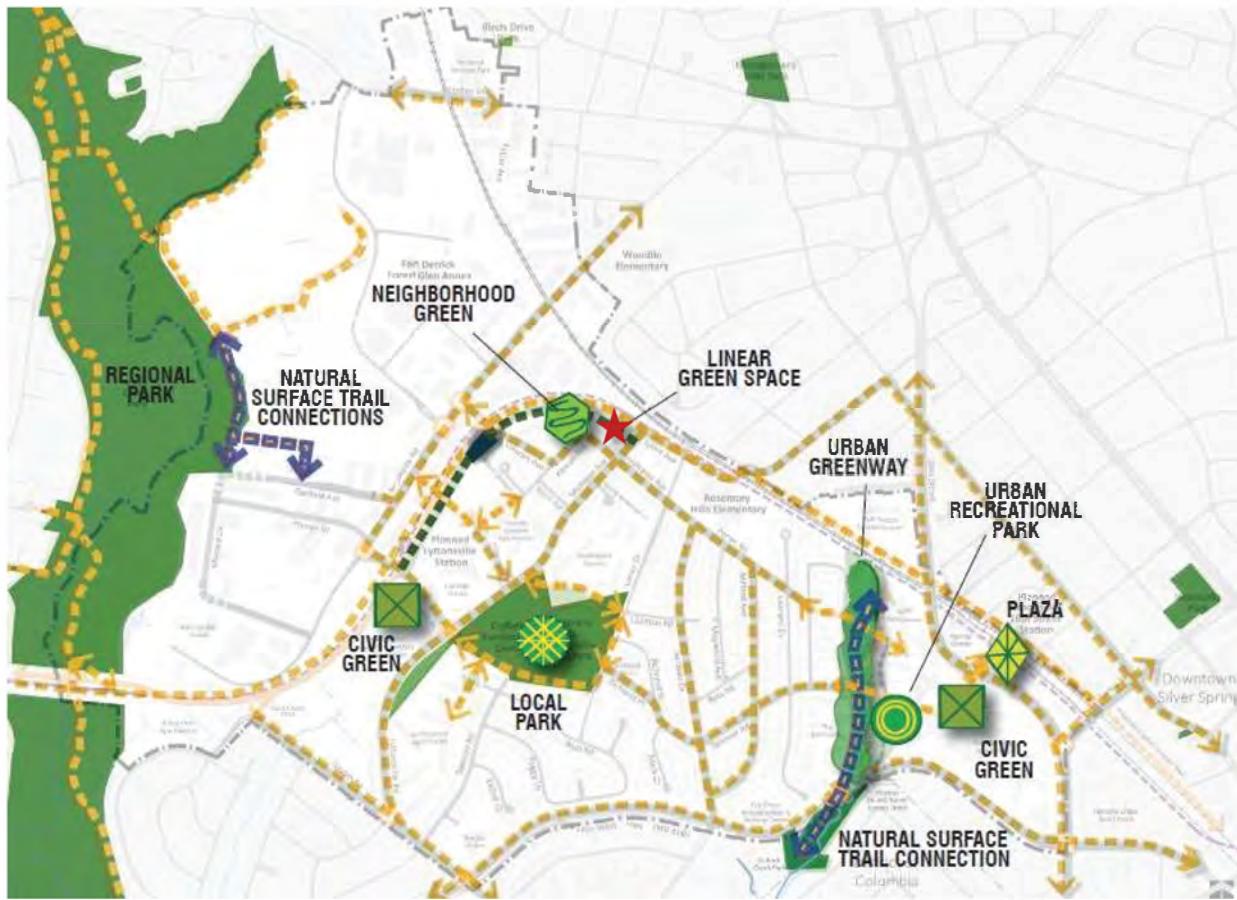
- *Create a public space network with a range of accessible open space types and sizes to reflect the area's diverse character and uses.*
- *Provide open spaces near the primary centers of activity, Capital Crescent Trail and Purple Line Stations, and areas with high pedestrian and bicycle traffic.*
- *Highlight the unique character and history of Greater Lyttonsville through new development and public space design.*
- *Incorporate historically oriented interpretive signage, markers, and commemorative art throughout the planning area, including within Purple Line Stations.*

The Sector Plan identifies this parcel as Potential Open Space along CCT and the Purple Line. (page 64, Figure 2.8.1: Public Space Network).

Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan Design Guidelines, Approved March 2019

The Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan Design [Guidelines](#) recommend park and public spaces to be integrated, welcoming, safe, comfortable, inviting, and easily accessible while promoting a sense of community and stewardship of cultural resources. The design principles focus on *Access and Connectivity, Sense of Community and Urban Ecology* which are aligned with the Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Design Guidelines. The site is shown as a part of the Linear Green Space adjacent to a Neighborhood Green on the Park Types Hierarchy diagram (page 21).

For the future Neighborhood Green, which will provide supplemental activities to this park, the plan recommends it to include a mix of social gathering, active, and contemplative areas. Key features may include a play area, skate spot, community garden, or other similar neighborhood-serving recreational facilities (page 25).



Park Types Hierarchy, Greater Lyttonsville Design Guidelines, March 2019

Bicycle Master Plan, Approved and Adopted December 2018

The [Bicycle Master Plan](#) is a comprehensive overhaul of the 1978 Master Plan of Bikeways, 2005 Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan and all bikeway recommendations in past functional plans, area master plans and sector plans.

The Capital Crescent Trail is identified as one of the Breezeway Corridors from the District of Columbia to the Silver Spring Transit Center (page 76), a major connection between Bethesda and Silver Spring that provides off-street, shared use, two-way travel for people walking, bicycling, and using other non-motorized modes. The segment east of Bethesda to the Silver Spring Transit Center will be paved as part of the Purple Line light rail project. The plan recommends adding lighting along the trail between Bethesda Avenue and the Silver Spring Transit Center (page 76).

2022 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan

The 2022 Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan serves as the planning policy for parks and recreation in Montgomery County to the year 2027 and beyond. It assesses needs and recommends strategies for the delivery of park and recreation facilities, protection of natural resource areas, and preservation of historic/cultural areas and agricultural lands. The Plan recommends promoting physical activities, social connections, and civic engagement to serve the diverse population including historically and underserved neighborhoods and respond to the needs of all age groups. Recommendations include:

- *Develop parks that serve multiple functions.*
- *Facilitate creation of public spaces that accommodate multiple needs, including recreation, education, community-building, and resource stewardship.*
- *Acquire and develop parks in locations that are served by good transportation options.*
- *Ensure that parks and recreation opportunities are widely accessible and equitably distributed.*
- *Provide parks and recreational opportunities suited to the diverse interest and needs of our residents.*

In Chapter 3, Social Connections and Civic Engagement, the Plan recommends developing more attractive and culturally appropriate public spaces (page 44).

- *Use parks and interpretation to tell the story of Montgomery County's history, culture, and natural resources, with a focus on historically marginalized groups, including Black, Hispanic, Native-American and LGBTQ communities.*
- *Preserve and support unique gathering places and sites that enhance neighborhood character and reflect local culture*
- *Incorporate public art and public performances to celebrate local history and culture to create meaningful connections between people and places important to civic life.*
- *Sustain an arts and culture ecosystem in parks that enriches the lives of county residents and the vitality of its communities.*

Greater Lyttonsville is a historically African American underprivileged community that is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. Some residents are descendants of the original Black settlement. The average household income is 38% lower than the County's average. The new neighborhood park will promote social equity, highlight unique cultural resources, and serve both local residents and regional trail users.

2018 Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan (EPS Plan)

The Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan ([EPS Plan](#)) identifies areas with the highest need for parks and open spaces and recommends opportunities to increase the amount of parks and open space in those communities. The Plan promotes public spaces as platforms where people can share experiences and build a sense of community. On Figure 16, page 29, neighborhood parks are identified as Community Use Parks – they are small parks that provide informal recreation in residential areas. Typical facilities include play equipment, playing fields, sitting areas, shelters, and tennis and multi-use courts.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The parcel is approximately 130 feet wide and 300 feet long with grades that drop down approximately 13 feet from southeast to northwest at about a 4% slope. The parcel fronts the Capital Crescent Trail and Purple Line light rail to the north and borders single family dwellings to the south, Michigan Avenue to the east, and the end of Kansas Avenue to the west. Rosemary Hills Elementary School is a block to the east. The site is highly visible from the new Talbot Avenue bridge, and it can be easily accessed from the CCT as well as neighborhood sidewalks and streets. There is a speed bump at the north end of Michigan before making the right turn onto Talbot Avenue.



2021 Aerial Map

The former forested site was cleared and is currently actively used as a construction staging area for the Purple Line. The property, which is currently controlled by MTA, will be transferred to the M-NCPPC upon completion of the Purple Line. There are two existing utility poles along the CCT within the parcel about 190 feet apart and 20 feet set back from the northern property boundary along the CCT. The section of Talbot Avenue between Michigan Avenue and Lanier Drive is currently closed for construction. A portion of a neighboring residential property owner's driveway on Michigan Avenue encroaches on the property. An easement will be provided to allow the driveway to remain in place.

Soil sampling and analysis was conducted for Parcel 138 in 2019 and 2021. The soil report concludes that the concentration of specific soil parameters at some of the sampling locations exceed the MDE 2018 Residential Cleanup Standard for Soil and Groundwater. The report recommends not to reuse site-generated soil for fill grading at the future park and that any exposed soil at cuts be covered by an engineering control such as hardscape features, overlying imported clean fill, or other constructed features. MTA has agreed to remove the top 18 inches of soil to ensure any contaminated soils are removed. The park project will include any additional remediation measures that may be necessary.

Lyttonsville and Talbot Avenue Bridge

In 1853 Samuel Lytton, a free Black man, purchased four acres of land in the farming community just outside the Silver Spring area. Following the Civil War, more African Americans settled in the area. In 1867, the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad began to acquire land to construct a new rail line which would connect Washington, D.C. and the railroad's main line in Frederick County, Maryland. In 1891, two years before Lytton passed away, the railroad condemned a right-of-way through his land to build the Georgetown Branch of the Metropolitan line. Soon after Lytton's death in 1893 his farmland was subdivided, and either sold or rented to other African Americans, which further solidified the area as a hamlet for African Americans.

The Metropolitan line served as a boundary between the African American community of Lyttonsville, as it came to be known, and neighborhoods east of the bridge, such as North Woodside, Woodside, and Rosemary Hills, where property acquisition by anyone identified as a person of African descent was denied by racially restrictive deed covenants, and fair access to local businesses was limited due to strict Jim Crow segregation statutes. The Talbot Avenue Bridge became a representation of segregation, as it was used during a time when African American residents of Lyttonsville relied upon the bridge to access goods and services in the mostly white neighborhoods of downtown Silver Spring on the other side.

The Talbot Avenue Bridge was built in 1918 to accommodate automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic between the Lyttonsville community and the residential subdivisions of the periphery of Silver Spring. The historic bridge was rehabilitated in 1986, and steel guardrails were added to both sides of the bridge in 1996. Ownership of the bridge was transferred from CSX, the owner of the rail line after B&O, to Montgomery County between 1998 and 2000.

Additional repairs were performed between 2007 and 2008 to address safety concerns. After failing a safety inspection, the bridge was permanently closed to vehicular traffic in 2017. Following the centennial celebration of the bridge in 2019, it was finally broken down and placed in storage at the Brookville Depot.



Condition of Talbot Avenue Bridge plate girders (March 22, 2023)

EverGreene, a historic preservation consultant, carried out field investigations of the bridge in storage on March 22, 2023. It was determined that corrosion of the historic bridge was progressing rapidly. The assessment found corrosion, areas with collected debris, soiling, bio-growth, damage caused by wildlife, damage caused by graffiti, locations of material loss, and missing components. The north and south plate girders from the Talbot Avenue Bridge are in poor condition. Notable deterioration includes large areas of corrosion, the majority of which has been exacerbated due to standing water and exposure to the elements while in storage. Due to the method of storage since its removal in 2019, the corrosion has continued to worsen across a majority of the lower third of both girders. Refer to Attachment 4.

Agency Coordination and Regulatory Approvals

The following is a summary of agency coordination performed for this project:

M-NCPPC - Montgomery Parks

Staff met with various internal stakeholders within M-NCPPC throughout the planning process as part of the Planning, Design, Construction and Operations (PDCO) team process. This included staff from Park Police, Area 2 Planners, Facilities Management, Southern Region, Urban Forestry, ADA, Environmental Engineering, Cultural Resources, Water Resources, and Park and Trail Planning.

M-NCPPC - Montgomery Planning

A Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD), Forest Conservation Exemption was submitted and is currently under review. There is no forest on this property, and

it will qualify for an exemption. There is one specimen tree on an adjacent residential property which will be adversely affected by construction of the park. Staff has coordinated with the property owner and cooperative discussions are underway to mitigate or compensate for the impact. Refer to Attachment 1 for the plans.

Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS)

The stormwater management concept plan for the park was submitted and is currently under review. The plan proposes to fully meet on-site stormwater management goals via Environmental Site Design to the Maximum Extent Practicable with micro-bioretention areas. Refer to Attachment 2 for the plans.

Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)

Staff coordinated with MTA, MCDOT, Atkins and RJM Engineering during the facility planning process to acquire site data and construction documents for the Purple Line and Capital Crescent Trail (CCT). It was confirmed that the Capital Crescent Trail will not include lighting or restrooms at this time. Electrical conduit will be included in the park project to accommodate future lighting.

Soil sampling and analysis was conducted by Rummel, Klepper, and Kahl, LLP (RK& K) on behalf of MTA and MCDOT for the Purple Line Parcel 138 in 2019 and 2021. The shallow soil (0 to 1-foot) Characterization Letter Report and the Supplemental Report concludes that the concentration of specific soil parameters at some of the sampling locations exceed the MDE 2018 Residential Cleanup Standard for Soil and Groundwater. As a part of the purchase of Parcel 138 and the adjacent CSX railroad corridor in February 2019, the former owner placed use limitations on future development of the parcel requiring regulatory review prior to use for 'any recreational purpose'. In order to remove the recreational use restrictions, on June 27, 2019, MDOT and MTA requested the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Land Restoration Program (LRP) to review the deed, soil sampling results, and proposed site development plans. Details of the soil sampling by Chesapeake Environmental Management, Inc. (CEM) on April 2, 2019, and by RK&K on August 28, 2019 and March 9-10, 2021, are described in RK&K's Shallow Soil Characterization Reports dated September 16, 2019 and May 3, 2021. Refer to Attachment 3. The release of restrictions has been approved.

Staff coordinated the existing in-line utility pole (786425-320950) that conflicts with the preferred location of the Bridge Memorial and requested to shift the pole 30 feet east toward Michigan Avenue to accommodate the memorial. Unfortunately, MTA determined that they were unable to relocate the pole as part of the Purple Line project. Staff intends to work with Pepco (and any other utility agencies) to determine whether the desired relocation could occur after the M-NCPPC takes possession of the property. If relocation is not feasible, adjustments will be made to the park layout during detailed design.

Community Outreach

Staff held three community meetings to discuss the project and obtain input for the park plan. The first public meeting was held in June 2022 to gather initial ideas. Preliminary concept alternatives, developed by the Parks landscape architect, were presented to the community in October 2022. Two Open Town Hall surveys were available for public input over extended periods following the first and second community meetings. Besides hearing feedback from well-attended public meetings, staff also received written comments from neighbors and the Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee and neighborhood associations throughout the design

process. Staff also participated in the Talbot Avenue Bridge Lantern Walk in November 2022. The recommended plan was presented in a third meeting with the community in March 2023.

Community Meeting #1

The first community meeting was held on June 29, 2022. The goal of this first meeting was to provide background information for the upcoming new neighborhood park and gather input and ideas from the community. Staff shared the Sector Plan's recommendations for park and public space network, as well as preliminary program ideas for the new park. Images of relevant examples that might be applicable to the project were shown for inspiration. An overview of the process and schedule was also discussed. Approximately 50 people attended the virtual meeting. An Open Town Hall on-line survey was available for approximately 2 months following the meeting for the community to provide additional comments and express preferences on proposed amenities for the park. The survey had 145 visitors and received 39 registered responses.

The following program summary was developed for the park based on guidance from the Sector Plan, community input, as well as initial program recommendations from the Park Planning and Stewardship Division.

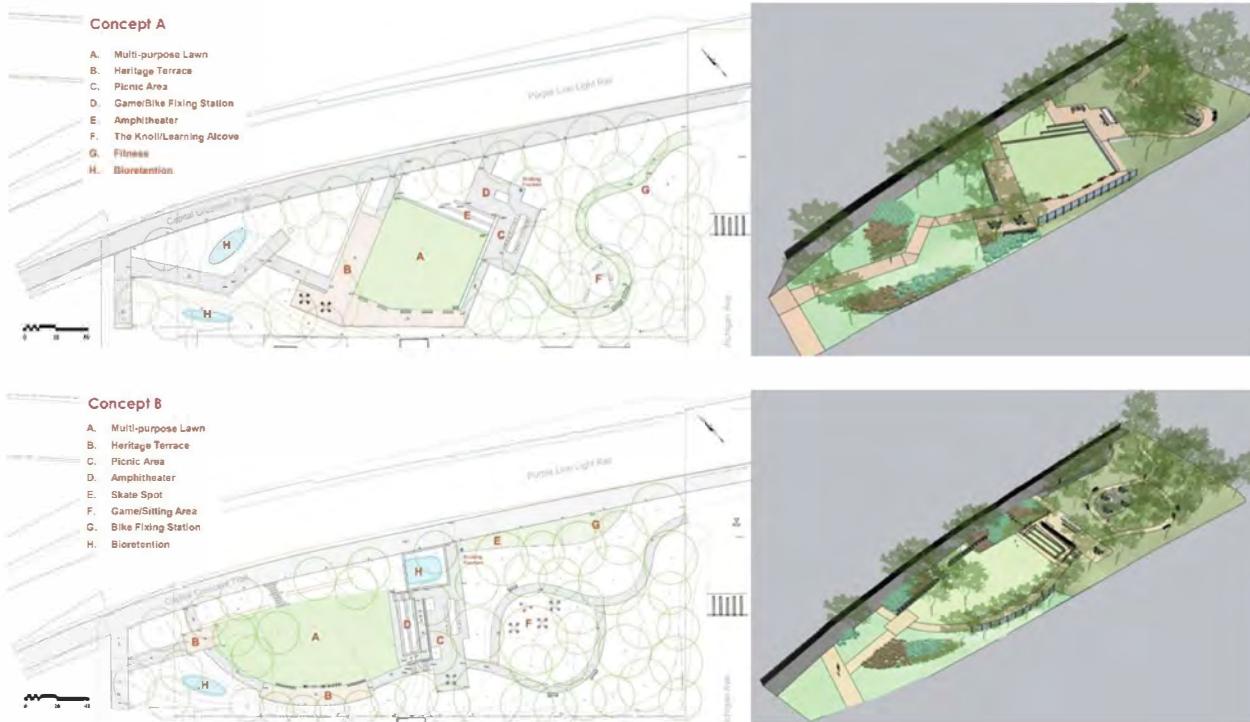
- **Historic Interpretation** – Incorporate bridge components with interpretation to highlight the unique culture and history of Lyttonsville.
- **Community Open Space/Terrace** – Provide open space for flexible uses, terraces, and an amphitheater for gatherings, picnicking and seating.
- **Contemplative Area** – Provide seating with shade for quiet enjoyment.
- **Play Elements** – Create play opportunities that integrate with the park setting.
- **Trail Amenities** – Provide a drinking fountain, bike racks, and a bike fixing station.
- **Accessibility** – Provide accessible paths within the park and connections to the CCT.
- **Buffer** – Create a visual and vegetative buffer between the park and adjoining houses.
- **Stormwater Management, Landscape Restoration**
- **Signage, Site furnishings & Public Art**

Community Meeting #2

The second public meeting was held on October 25, 2022, via a virtual meeting. Staff presented two alternative concept plans (A and B). Visual references of the design features, site amenities and landscape approaches were shared to convey the ideas. Approximately 30 people participated in the meeting.



Program Concept



Preliminary Concept A and B

Concept A proposes a multi-purpose lawn at the heart of the park with a picnic and game area, amphitheater, and terraces that frame the open space. A zigzag walkway facilitates grade changes from the Kansas Avenue entrance. Secondary entrances provide convenient access for the trail users. Stormwater management facilities are integrated with ecological planting at the lower west side. A meandering walkway provides connection to the Michigan Avenue entrance. A learning alcove and fitness area are located under tree shade and overlook the park at the high ground. Reclaimed bridge components are featured at the terraces to highlight the history and culture of Lyttonsville. A fence buffering the park along the east-west border provides opportunities for interpretation. Benches and a seat wall offer opportunities for people to rest and enjoy the atmosphere.

Concept B proposes a multi-purpose lawn on the western half, a revegetated natural area on the eastern half and a picnic terrace and amphitheater that marry the two. Various walkways and connections provide convenient access to the park from the streets and the CCT. An amphitheater with a ramp transitions grades between the lower lawn and the upper picnic terrace while anchoring the open space. A stormwater planter enhances the picnic experience and becomes a water feature during storms. Reclaimed bridge components are featured at the park frontage along the CCT as a landmark. A curved walkway with seating and interpretive panels frames the multi-purpose lawn and offers interactive story-telling opportunities. A small skating element along the CCT provides fun activities.

The meeting attendees, as well as the park staff team, generally preferred Concept B. An Open Town Hall on-line survey was available for approximately 3 months following the meeting for the community to provide additional comments and express preferences on the concept plans. This topic had 176 visitors and received 56 registered responses. The Open Town Hall survey reported similar results with a clear preference for Concept B, which includes a larger open space in alignment with the property.

The approach of using the grade to separate various areas and an interpretive fence to screen the park from the houses was well-received. There was a question about accessibility within the park and concerns for pedestrian safety when accessing the park from the surrounding streets, particularly Talbot Avenue from the elementary school. Participants also expressed preferences for a pollinator garden and a small nature play area for children.

Most comments at the community meeting and Town Hall survey were related to how the Talbot Avenue Bridge memorial should be integrated in the design. Both concepts incorporated segments of the bridge and girders into the landscape and grades as a means of interpreting them. Participants did not agree with that approach and expressed strong interest in incorporating the bridge components on the site to represent a bridge experience with the two girders facing each other. They wanted bridge elements installed in a way that visitors could travel over a re-created bridge that provided a sense of crossing similar to the old bridge. Incorporating the bridge components in this way would protect the history and its great meaning to the local community. The participants also strongly recommended that bridge components be curated by a professional cultural historian so they do not deteriorate during storage and are treated appropriately as they are re-used for the future park. Residents want to be involved in the conservation and interpretation of the bridge memorial as well as other interpretive elements in the future nearby Lyttonsville Museum.

A joint letter dated November 21, 2022, from *Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee, Lyttonsville Community Civic Association, North Woodside Citizens Association and Rosemary Hills Neighbors Association* further outlined the requests:

- the two large girders be placed parallel to each other, separated by a relatively short distance.
- the girders be placed directly on ground-level foundations; there is no need for the girders to be self-supporting, but they do need to be fully visible.
- new design elements – such as ground cover, plantings, or even short pieces of train track – be used to give the illusion that the bridge is spanning something.
- the space between the girders be made to look like and function as a path. Ideally, this space would be covered by wooden planks, set in such a way as to mimic the wooden planks that served as the deck on the original bridge.
- the memorial be designed to recall the experience of community members using the bridge. The bridge was constructed at a time when racial segregation was both the law and the practice not just throughout the country, but in Montgomery County. Residents of Lyttonsville had to cross the bridge to get to employment and shopping centers and again to return to the relative safety of the community. It would be a good idea, therefore, if the placement of the bridge could be used to invoke the experience of transitioning from a quiet protected place to a more cosmopolitan society and back again. One way to do this is to have the bridge connect the busy trail to the quiet interior of the park. You might be able to develop other designs to achieve this objective.
- the bridge memorial be coordinated with the Art in Transit projects at the Purple Line Station and the future History of Lyttonsville Exhibit at the Coffield Center. By focusing the park design on the bridge and the experience of its users, the memorial will not repeat information and images provided by these other installations.

Community Meeting #3

The third community meeting was a hybrid meeting held in person with a virtual attendance option on March 3, 2023, at the Gwendolyn E. Coffield Community Center. Due to the length of the bridge girders, the community request to re-create a bridge experience was a design challenge for this small site. Staff presented bridge memorial studies in various configurations and a refined plan with 3D renderings for public input. A study model and graphic exhibits were also on display to help communicate the design. The bridge conservation consultant, who had been brought into the design team following the second community meeting, presented findings and general recommendations for conservation and storage of the bridge. Staff also shared a proposed approach for ecological landscape and meadow establishment testing work. MCDOT staff joined the meeting to answer questions related to the Purple Line and the CCT. There were 26 people who attended the meeting in person and 10 who attended virtually.

The plan refined the prior concepts and explored strategies for integrating a bridge memorial into the park. Three bridge placement options were studied and presented based on the prior concepts. The goal was to reinstall the pair of bridge girders in the park so that it would be spatially compatible to the surrounding amenities and visually intriguing from the CCT; to create a sense of crossing and a special space for people to remember the bridge and history.

Option 1 (on Concept A) and Option 2 (on Concept B) propose locating the bridge memorial at the terrace to be part of the central area. The bridge girders are approximately 60' long and between 2'-5" to 4'-10" in height. Due to the size of the girders, both Options would bisect the open space and obstruct visual connection within the park.

Option 3 proposes locating the bridge memorial parallel to the CCT to protect the interior program areas. This option uses the bridge memorial as an entry feature and a visual buffer from the CCT. Sitting at the high ground, this location offers views to and from the park, the



Bridge Memorial Placement Studies

CCT, and the new Talbot Avenue Bridge, and a place to commemorate the bridge while watching people and trains. The structure can be appreciated up-close and from a distance on all sides. The grade change of the ground helps to elevate the bridge on the downhill side and enhance the sense of crossing. Aligning the bridge at the long side of the park alleviates the vast scale of the girders.

The bridge placement Option 3 and the refined park plan were very well-received. The three-dimensional renderings scaled model and images of examples that were presented at the meeting were effective in conveying the design intent. Several participants including the President of the Lyttonsville Civic Association and an immediate neighbor to the park shared their comments and earnest support for the plan. The community was pleased that their voices were heard and that significant modifications were able to be made to the plan. Staff also received positive feedback for the ecological approach to landscape restoration.

Recommended Facility Plan



Recommended Facility Plan

The Recommended Facility Plan envisions a series of terraced spaces to transition the grades and offer a variety of experiences that engage all age groups and include the following: a central common open space for flexible uses, the Bridge Memorial parallel to the CCT as a gateway and cultural terminus, an informal amphitheater with terraces for gathering and picnicking, a shaded contemplative space with play opportunities, a buffer along the southern property boundary adjacent to residences, accessible paths and ramps, a small skating element and a bike fixing station along the CCT, stormwater management, landscape restoration, a drinking fountain and site furnishings. The plan promotes physical and visual connectivity within the park and to the surrounding trail and streets and incorporates the principles of *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED) to achieve a safer and more accessible park.



Recommended Facility Plan

Key elements include:

A. Multi-purpose Lawn – create a consolidated interior lawn as community open space for flexible uses.



Multi-purpose Lawn and Heritage Terrace, View from West

B. Bridge Memorial – restore and reinstall the pair of girders from the former Talbot Avenue Bridge with interpretation to commemorate the bridge and the unique history of Lyttonsville. Set the girders over pieces of re-created “train track” slightly elevated above the sloping ground to simulate the experience of crossing the tracks. Cover the bridge space between the girders with wood planks to recall the original bridge decking. An overlook by a planter provides a space to transition the bridge and is a great spot to glance into the overall park

and to watch trail and train activities. The continuous meadow planting along the CCT in front of the bridge memorial softens the scale of the structure.

The existing in-line utility pole that is in conflict with the desired location for the memorial will be investigated during the detailed design phase. The width of the memorial could be adjusted if shifting the in-line pole 30 feet east toward Michigan Avenue is determined to be infeasible. The memorial is shown at the desired location in the recommended plan.



Bridge Memorial, Aerial View



Bridge Memorial, View from the CCT

C. Heritage Terrace – a terrace with seating opportunities at the heart of the park to frame the lawn open space. Fencing with artwork or interpretation creates a backdrop for the central area.



Picnic Area, View from South

D. Picnic Area – an elevated terrace with a seat wall, picnic tables, and tree shade for gathering, picnicking, and casual enjoyment. The space looks over the informal amphitheater and lawn and links to the Bridge Memorial and upper Play/Sitting area.



Heritage Terrace, View from West



Overlook Transition to Picnic Area

E. Amphitheater – tiers of seat walls integrated with an accessible ramp for informal spectating, gathering, and lounging. The space anchors the community open space and provides programming opportunities for cultural events. This feature helps to efficiently transition changes in elevation across the site.



Amphitheater



Amphitheater, View from North

F. Play/Sitting Area – a flexible space at the upper area with seating and play opportunities. Re-created “train tracks” integrate with walkways and the bridge to highlight the railroad history and to experience the bridge from different perspectives. Boulders, logs and native no-mow meadow planting provide alternatives for children to explore and interact with nature and each other. This area is anticipated to be heavily planted with trees to provide a shady setting in contrast with the open lawn area. A climbable, iconic play feature offers prospects for kids to watch trains and people come and go from up high.



Play/Sitting Area, View from South

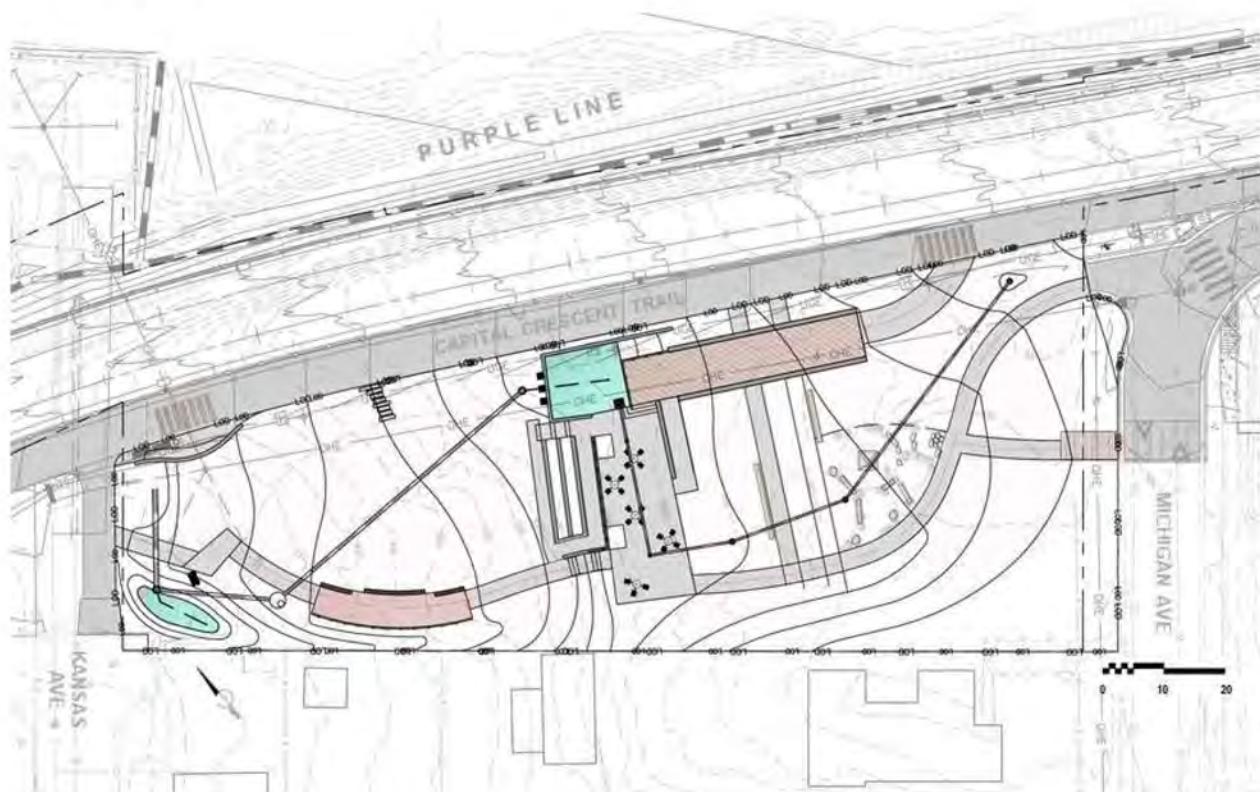
G. Bike Fixing Station – a bike repair station by the CCT at the Michigan Avenue entrance that is equipped with tools to repair bikes on the go.

H. Skate Spot – a small skating element integrated at the edge of the CCT to offer skating fun while protecting the interior program area and maintaining distance from immediate neighbors. Another durable skating element could possibly be added along the CCT to complement the activities.



Skate Spot, View North from the CCT

I. Bioretention – incorporate aesthetic bioretention facilities to ecologically treat stormwater runoff. A stormwater planter could be integrated with the overlook at the Bridge Memorial to enhance the bridge experience. The overflow weir could become a water feature during storm events.



Stormwater Management Concept



Bioretention Planter and Overlook, View from the CCT



Potential Bioretention Water Feature

Accessible Walks and Ramp – An ADA compliant walkway system that is a minimum of six feet wide provides access throughout the park area and connects to the CCT and the streets.



Park Entrance from Michigan Avenue



Park Entrance from Talbot Avenue

Landscape Restoration – Restore canopy with a variety of native trees that will provide shade, habitat and seasonal interests to enhance the program areas. Introduce low stature, native meadow landscape for the non-programmed areas to benefit the environment. Once established, the meadow only requires annual mowing. Native meadows bring beauty in all seasons, provide habitat for birds, butterflies, and bees, reduce stormwater runoff, and improve

water quality. The ecological landscape promotes sustainability practices and contributes to environmental mitigation along the Purple Line. These nature-based solutions and best management practices also provide environmental learning opportunities.

Amenities – Provide a variety of seating opportunities including seat walls, benches, and picnic tables, as well as a drinking fountain and trash receptacles.

Interpretation – Provide interpretation for the Talbot Avenue Bridge Memorial and the ecological landscape approach. Integrate interpretation opportunities with the program elements or furnishings to provide engaging learning experiences. Interpretive themes will be coordinated with other historical interpretation planned by the Purple Line project and will be further developed during the detailed design phase of the project.

COST ESTIMATE

Design and Construction Costs

A summary of design and construction costs is outlined in the table below. A detailed cost estimate is included in Attachment 9.

Item	Total Cost
Site Preparation and Demolition	\$175,000
Grading and Earthwork	\$24,000
Stormwater Management & Drainage	\$181,000
Structures	\$544,000
Paving (Walkways & Terraces)	\$76,000
Park Amenities	\$127,000
Landscaping	\$118,000
Utilities	\$80,000
CONSTRUCTION SUBTOTAL	
Contingency (20%)	\$265,000
Detailed Design & Construction Documentation Professional Services	\$150,000
Staff Chargebacks (Design)	\$80,000
Staff Chargebacks (Construction)	\$80,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST	
	\$1,900,000

Operating Budget Impact

The operating budget impact is estimated at \$30,000 - \$35,000 per year upon completion of the new park, anticipated in FY29. This information is a preliminary estimate based on the current concept plan and will be finalized at the time of final design and park construction. The estimate is included in Attachment 10.

CONCLUSION



Photo of Scale Model

Staff recommends approval of the Recommended Facility Plan and associated cost estimate. The future neighborhood park in Lyttonsville is a vital community hub, cultural destination, and a rest stop along the CCT. The new neighborhood park in this historically African American minority community will promote social equity, accessibility, and highlight unique cultural resources. Realization of the park will help restore the environment from a former industrial site and will provide amenities to serve surrounding residents as well as regional trail users. The Talbot Avenue Bridge Memorial will become an important portal for local Black history and provides a unique opportunity to tell this story. The park will help to heal past racial divisions and foster deeper community connections between the neighborhoods on both sides of the train tracks.

Attachments:

1. Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD), Forest Conservation Exemption
2. Stormwater Management Concept
3. Shallow Soil Characterization Reports
4. Talbot Avenue Bridge Condition Assessment Report
5. Geotechnical Report
6. Community Meeting Reports
7. Open Town Hall Surveys
8. Letter from Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee
9. Preliminary Cost Estimate
10. Preliminary Operating Budget Impact
11. 35% Plan Documents

Lyttonsville Memo 2023-0824 final

Final Audit Report

2023-08-24

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